

*A good Wife a great Blessing:*  
OR, THE  
HONOUR and HAPPINESS  
OF THE  
MARRIAGE STATE,  
IN TWO  
SERMONS.

CONTAINING,

An Account of the Marriage  
in Paradise.

Of the Apostles.  
Of the honourable and happy  
State of Matrimony.

Marriage never condemned but  
by Hereticks.

That forbidding to marry is  
one of the Doctrine of Devils.  
St. Paul's Opinion whether it  
is better for Virgins to mar-  
ry or live single.

Of forcing Virgins to marry.

That *Adam* could not live hap-  
py even in Paradise without  
a Wife.

Of the Duties of a Wife.

The Advantages of a married  
Man above a Batchelor.

The Benefits of a prudent Wife.  
Women not to be accounted a  
necessary Evil, but a great  
Blessing.

How a good Wife ought to be  
treated.

How Men ought to love their  
Wives.

Of hindering Wives from Mo-  
ney.

Of Marriages between People  
of different Religions.

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*Who so findeth a Wife findeth a good Thing.*

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. TAYLOR, at the *Rose* in *Exeter-Ex-*  
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(Price 1s.)

# A GOOD LIFE & GOOD DEATH; OR THE HONOURABLE AFFAIRS OF THE MARRIAGE STATE IN TWO SERMONS.

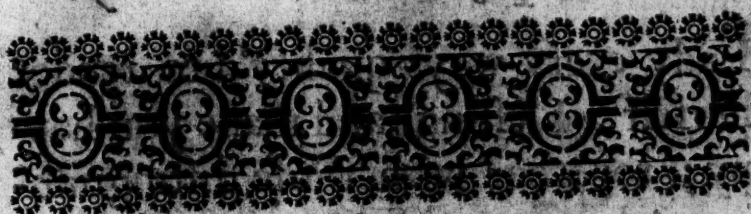
CONTAINING

<p>An Account of the Marriage              of the Duke of a Wife.              The Advantages of a married              Man above a Bachelor.              The Blessings of a pious Wife.              Women not to be accounted a              necessary Evil, but a great              Blessing.              How good Wives ought to be              loved.              How Men ought to love their              Wives.              Of separating Wives from Men.              Of the Difference between People              of different Complexions.</p>	<p>An Account of the Marriage              in London.              Of the Apoplexy.              Of the Incurable and happy              State of a Woman.              Marriage never condemned but              by a Man.              That Wives are to marry.              On the Difference of Death.              Of the Difference between              a good and a bad Wife.              Of the Difference between              a good and a bad Man.              Of the Difference between              a good and a bad Woman.              Of the Difference between              a good and a bad Child.</p>
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Whole finished a Wife finish a good thing.

LONDON:  
 Printed for T. Taylor, at the Rose in Pall-mall.  
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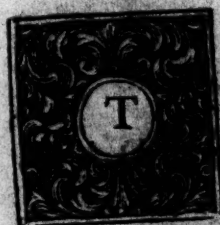
TO  
**JOHN SHAW**

OF  
**ELTHAM in Kent, Esq;**

AND  
**His Virtuous LADY,**

**Mrs. ANNA-MARIA SHAW.**

S I R,



**T**HE Example you have  
lately shewn us in the  
Choice of a fine Lady,  
whom Providence has so  
fortunately made your Spouse ; a

A 2

Lady

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Lady every ways qualify'd to render herself a Blessing, and make you happy; together with those distinguishing Advantages of Nature and Education, as well as of Estate and Family, which have so equally suited you for the Possession of so great a Blessing, have given you such an indefeasible Right to these SERMONS, and laid such an inviolable Obligation upon me, that I should be a Rebel to all Justice and good Manners, should I not take this Opportunity of proclaiming your Right and Title to a Crown; yes, indeed, to a *virtuous Woman*, who is a CROWN to her Husband.

THE Example you have lately shewn us in the Choice of a fine Lady, whom Providence has so fortunately made your Spouse; a  
LADY A



## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

M A D A M,

**T**H E Reason why I have likewise presum'd to adorn these Discourses with your recommending Name, is, not that I pretend to instruct you, whose exemplary Life and Conduct is the better Preacher; but to set forth to the World something which may give a quicker Impression than Precept, that the Reader (tho' never so frozen and benighted) may be warm'd and guided by the Light that shines from you; and by the Strength and Brightness of your Example, make herself worth *finding*, and learn to be a *Blessing*. Besides, Madam, while I am admiring that just Equality between you, whereby you seem to be design'd and made for each other, I can no longer doubt but you Both have an equal Claim to this publick Testimony

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

mony of my Reverence and Esteem.  
And as by the Providence of God  
your own inviting Merits have se-  
cur'd you a Gentleman wife and  
good enough to discern and value  
the Prize; so may every one of  
your Sex, who copies after so  
charming a Precedent, meet with  
as desirable a Lot, and enter the  
holy State with the same glorious  
Prospect of Love and Happiness.

AND now, to this publick Te-  
stimony of my Respect, I am sure  
I need not ask Leave to subjoin  
my good Wishes and Prayers to  
Almighty God for you; which I  
will chuse to do (as near as I can  
remember, tho' perhaps not exactly)  
in the Words of an † excellent Pre-  
late now with God.

MAR

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† Bishop Ken.



## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

*MAY the God of Love, (who has appointed the Marriage-State for the Comfort of our Life, and made it an Emblem of that blessed Union he bears to his Church) as he has made you Both one Flesh, make you also one Soul. May your Love to each other be ever (as it now is) mutual and inviolable. May, Sir, your affectionate Authority, and, Madam, your submissive Sweetness, produce an entire Friendship and Harmony between you. And may that inspiring Plenitude of Delight and Fondness, which, methinks, I see flowing in upon you, and is so likely to make all your Days happy here; may it never transport you into a Forgetfulness of desiring, and of preparing to be happy near each other hereafter. And may this be now and always the hearty*  
Wish,

# *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Wish, and most ardent Prayer of  
all that know you, as well as of,

*Worthy* SIR,

AND

*Honour'd* MADAM,

*Your most Humble*

AND

*Obedient Servant,*

**Edward Creffeld.**







# Advertisement

## TO THE

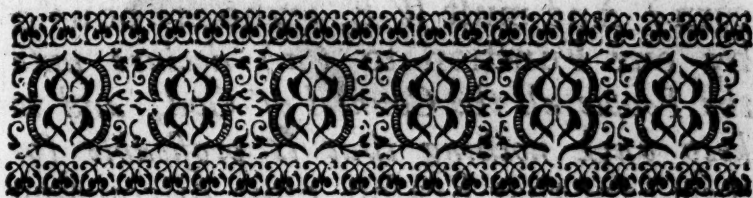
# READER.

*S*INCE these SERMONS were preach'd there is added, in the first of them, (besides the Marginal Annotation upon the Apostle's Marriage) a Paragraph or two, containing a Solution of some Texts of Scripture made Use of by some, since the preaching of these Sermons, as an Objection against the Dignity of the Marriage-State. That the Reader may therefore distinguish what is so added, from what was preach'd, I have enclos'd the Additions with Crochets, thus [ ], as he will find in the Margins.



1914





## S E R M O N I.

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P R O V. xviii. Ver. 22.

*Whoso findeth a Wife, findeth a good Thing, and obtaineth Favour of the Lord.*



THE Subject my Text naturally leads me to discourse of, I know not why it should so seldom be inquir'd into from the Pulpit, unless that we are generally discourag'd and driven from it by the ludicrous Temper of the Age. But is it therefore the less necessary, because People make it a Matter of Merriment and Ridicule, and will hardly attend to it

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with

with a Spirit of Seriousness and Concern? And must *WE*, (who are oblig'd by our Function to *(a)* *declare unto the People all the Counsel of God, and to keep back nothing that is profitable for them*) for that Reason, omit discoursing upon a Subject, which the Holy Spirit of God, the Blessed Jesus, and his inspir'd Apostles, were so very earnest and particular in recommending to the World? This Consideration, I hope, may work up your Minds into a serious Frame, and prepare you to receive what I am to say, with the same Sobriety and Affection with which I shall deliver it. And the Particulars I am going to set forth, shall be in such tender and unexceptionable Terms, as, I humbly conceive, will be both inoffensive and instructive. And my taking this Opportunity to extend my Thoughts upon this Subject, I flatter my self, will give it the Advantage of a more serious and compos'd Attention.

*Whofo findeth a Wife, findeth a good Thing, and obtaineth Favour of the Lord.*

These Words do offer to us these three Propositions.

*Ist,*

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*(a)* *Acts 20. 27.*



1<sup>st</sup>, In general, That Marriage is an honourable and happy State.

2<sup>dly</sup>, More particularly, That a Wife, meaning a virtuous and prudent Wife, (as *Salomon* explains himself in other Places) is a great Blessing. And,

3<sup>dly</sup>, That this Blessing is from the Lord.

The two first of these Propositions are compriz'd in the former Part of my Text, *Whoso findeth a Wife, findeth a good Thing*. The last is contain'd in the latter Part of the Words, *and obtaineth Favour of the Lord*.

First then, That Marriage is an honourable and happy State, which is included in that Expression of the Text, *a good Thing*; and more fully express'd by the Apostle, who tells us, (b) that *Marriage is honourable in all*, will appear by considering the *Author* who instituted it; the *Time* when; and the *Reasons* wherefore it was instituted.

1<sup>st</sup>, Marriage is honourable in Respect of its Author. We are taught in the

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(b) *Heb.* 13. 4.

the sacred History of the Creation, that it was establish'd by God at the first Beginning of the World; and being thus of Divine Institution, it is justly pronounc'd, and ought to be esteem'd, a sacred and honourable State. And because it was instituted immediately upon the Creation, it is evident, that the Almighty never design'd Mankind should be preserv'd, and the World peopled, any other Way, than by Marriage.

Another Thing that gives Honour to this State, is, the *Time* wherein it was ordain'd. It was ordain'd before the Fall, and in a State of Innocence, while Man was in his Uprightness, and as he came pure from the Hands of God. It was not originally appointed or prescrib'd as a Remedy against Sensuality and Incontinence: No, it was suitable to the greatest Perfection and Purity of Life; and the Wisdom of God saw it agreeable to a Paradise. It is therefore an Argument of great Weakness and Ignorance in those who pretend, that the Marriage-State is an Enemy to Religion, or a Clog and Hinderance to Virtue and Devotion. Indeed we read of some in the Gospel, who, when they were  
invited

invited to the Divine Feast, excus'd their not attending, because they were marry'd. But this was only a Pretence to cover their Unwillingness; for had they valu'd the Mercy of the Call, or had been the least desirous of accepting the Invitation, their Marriage needed not have hinder'd them; for they might, and undoubtedly would, have come, and brought their Wives with them.

Alas! there is no State of Life free from Incumbrances and Temptations. I own they are to be found in a *marry'd State*, and so are they in a *single Life*; and we may serve and obey God in the one, as well as in the other. Accordingly it is remarkable, that the Patriarchs, Priests, and Prophets, the holiest Men of God, and the rest of that Blessed Company under the *Law*, made Choice of a marry'd Life. As did likewise the Elders and Priests, and the † Apostles and Bishops under the *Gospel*.

Now,

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† St. Paul (1 Cor. 9. 5.) says of the rest of the Apostles, and the Brethren of the Lord and Cephas, that they not only had Wives, but carry'd them with them in their Travels, *Have we not* (says he) *Power to lead*



Now, if you please to look over the History of all single Persons, from the Beginning to this Day, you will not find that ever any liv'd more just and upright, more faithful and obedient, more holy and devout, than those Scripture-Examples, who were marry'd, and

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lead about a Sister a Wife, as well as other Apostles, and the Brethren of the Lord and Cephas? Some will have it a Sister a Woman; but if St. Paul had meant so, 'tis not likely he would have added γυναῖκα, a Woman; for ἀδελφὴν, Sister, would alone have been sufficient; and it is no more usual in the Greek to say, ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα, for a Sister, than ἀδελφὸν ἄνδρα, for a Brother. The Word Sister does imply a Woman; it would therefore be a great Impropiety of Speech, to say, a Sister a Woman; wherefore we must rather read it a Sister a Wife. And it is observable, as we may see in the Instance of old Tobit, Chap. 5. Ver. 20, that the Jews were wont to call their Wives Sisters, because of their common Origine. Besides, who were more fit to follow the Apostles in their Travels, and minister to, and take Care of them, than their Wives? For that Reason we cannot justly suppose they would leave their Wives behind, and take strange Women with them. This would have look'd scandalous, and reflected grievously upon their Reputation; and the more so, if those strange Women had been (as some pretend) other Mens Wives. And that γυναῖκα sometimes signifies a Wife, is no News, even to a School-Boy; and the same Word (Mat. 5. 28) comprehends either a marry'd or an unmarried Woman; and γυναῖκα render'd Woman in that Text, is either a Maid or another Man's Wife. And in

and some of them very indifferently too. All which does evidently shew, that the Marriage-State is more excellent than a single Life. And had Mankind continu'd in that Uprightness and Integrity which he had by Creation, a single Life had been of no Esteem amongst

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in other Places of Scripture, particularly in several Verses of the 7th Chapter of this Epistle, the same Word signifies expressly a Wife. And that thereby is meant a Wife in the Text I am now considering, is acknowledg'd even by some Fathers of the Romish Church; particularly Clement in his *Recognitions*, Lib. 7, and by Leo the Ninth, who directly affirms, (against the Epistle of Nicetas the Abbot) that the Apostles did carry about their Wives, (and not other strange Women, as some pretend) that they might be maintain'd by the Reward of their Preaching. And that St. Paul himself was a marry'd Man, he here intimates, by saying, That if he had pleas'd, he might also take his Wife with him, as a Companion in his Travels; and if he did not lead her about with him, as the rest did, it was because she should not be chargeable or burdensome to the Churches. Whereas, if they had been other rich Women the Apostles carry'd about with them, (as some contend) they would rather have been a Help and Support to the Churches. It is therefore groundlessly inferr'd by some, from this Place, that St. Paul was a single Man; for he does not say, *Have we not Power to HAVE a Wife*, but, *Have we not Power to LEAD ABOUT a Wife?* *ἡγεῖν*, [*circumducendi*] as 'tis in the Original; which denotes the Right or Power of a Husband over his Wife. And that St. Paul was a marry'd Man,

we

mongst us; neither should it have had any Place in the World, without great Contempt of God's Ordinance and Blessing. And tho' since the Fall, it be to some, who have the Gift of Continence, in many Respects far better than Marriage, yet that does not prove it is simply,

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we have the venerable Authority of St. Ignatius, (as well as some other antient Fathers) who, in his *Epist. ad Philadelph.* thus saith, *ἐυχόμεθα αἰεὶ θεῷ εὐρε-  
θεις πρὸς τοὺς ἄνθρωποις εὐρεθῆναι ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ, ὡς  
Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαάκ, καὶ Ἰακώβ, ὡς Ἰωσήφ, καὶ Ἰσαΐ, καὶ ἄλλων  
Προφητῶν; ὡς Πέτρος, καὶ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ, καὶ ἄλλων  
Ἀποστόλων, τοῖς γὰρ οὖν προσομιλοῦντων.* I desire to be found worthy of God at their Footsteps (meaning the Blessed) in his Kingdom; as of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; as of Joseph and Isaiah, and the rest of the Prophets; as of Peter and PAUL, and the other Apostles, who were marry'd Men. And even Cardinal Cajetan (*Com. in Phil. c. 4.*) allows of St. Paul's being marry'd; his Words (as I find them quoted by the pious and learned Bishop Hall, in his Treatise of *The Honour of the marry'd Clergy*, Lib. 1. Sect. 26) are these, *The Place seems to enforce it, not by demonstrative Reason, but by all reasonable Sense, that St. Paul had a Wife.* Nor is it any Objection against this what St. Paul says, Chap. 7, Ver. 7, 8, of this Epistle; for the Meaning of the Apostle in those Texts, (according to the best Commentators) is not that he absolutely wishes all People to lead a single Life; for how then could the Church of God be propagated, or the divine Benediction upon marry'd People fulfill'd? But only that every Body had the Gift of Continence as he had, and as little Appetite to the



*simply*, and in it self so; but that it is so only by *Accident*, and in Regard of fundry Calamities and Inconveniences which Sin has deriv'd upon Mankind.

And now I am speaking of the accidental Calamities and Inconveniences which proceeded from the Fall, it puts

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the lawful Pleasures of Marriage, as himself; and that it was expedient for Widows and unmarried People, at that Time, as it was a Time of Persecution, to remain as he was; that is, not to be more desirous of Marriage, than he was of the Society of his Wife. Or it may be (as others think) the Apostle was a Widower when he spoke those Words; and so tells the Widows and unmarried People, *It was good for them, if they abide even as be.* It was good for them, in regard to the Ease and Tranquility of Life in those troublesome Times, and to the Liberty of serving God. *I say therefore* (says the Apostle) *to the Unmarry'd and Widows*: The Word here render'd *unmarry'd*, is *ἀγαμοίς*. Now, *ἀγαμος* comprehends both those that were never marry'd, and those that have lost their Wives; and that it may in this Text be understood of such as have lost their Wives, (as well as of such as never had any) is not improbable, in that the same Word is also us'd in the 11th Verse, where it plainly signifies a *marry'd Woman*, but departed from her Husband. And if she that is marry'd, and only departed from her Husband, is call'd *ἀγαμος*, how much rather may he be so call'd, who was formerly marry'd, but now has lost his Wife? Therefore it is not without all Reason suppos'd, that when St. Paul said to the Unmarry'd the *ἀγαμοί*, as 'tis in the Original, that *it was good for them to abide*

me in Mind of the other Thing I mention'd in the third Place, which gives Honour to Marriage, and that is the *End* for which it was ordain'd. It is a Means to propagate Posterity, and so people the World, that there may never want a Generation of Men upon the

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as he was; that he was ἀγαπός, unmarried, only by Reason his Wife was dead; and so (according to the Opinion of some) was a *Widower* when he spoke these Words. Besides, in the 34th Verse, this very Word ἀγαπός is attributed to a *Widow*; which is the *unmarry'd Woman* there spoken of, as you may see in Dr. *Hammond's* Annotations upon the Text, where he prefers the Reading of the *Alexandrian* Copy, before that which is vulgarly receiv'd; according to which, the Word *μετὰ ταῦτα*, which, in the vulgar Reading, is the first Word in the 34th Verse, is (and doubtless should be) the last Word in the preceding, that is, the 33d Verse with the Particle καὶ before it. So that the 33d Verse should run thus, *But he that is marry'd, careth for the Things of the World, how he may please his Wife, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, and is divided, or determin'd between two, whether he shall serve God as a Christian, or please his Wife as a Husband; to which the Expression, without Distraction, in the 35th Verse, is oppos'd, as spoken of the unmarried. Then follows the 34th Verse, which, according to the Copy the learned Doctor prefers, begins thus, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἀγαπός, καὶ ἡ παρθένος ἡ ἀγαπός μετὰ ταῦτα τοῦ κυρίου, &c. and the unmarried Woman, (i. e. the Widow) and the unmarried Virgin, careth for the Things of the Lord. But the Oxford Edition of the New Testament, Anno 1675, takes Notice of some*

the Earth; and to raise up a holy Seed, and so replenish the Church, that there may be always a holy Company of Men and Women to worship and glorify God. There are several other Ends of Matrimony I might mention, but I have other Things to speak to; and therefore these shall suffice to shew, that Marriage is both an honourable and happy State.

Besides this, our Blessed Saviour's Company, with that of his holy Mother and his Disciples, at the Wedding in *Cana*, suppos'd to be St. *John's*, does give such a Reputation to Marriage, as must

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some Copies which read this Place in the same Manner as that which Dr. *Hammond* prefers, excepting that the second *ἀγαπᾷ* after *ἡ ἀγαθή* is omitted; and truly it is superfluous, and not so properly repeated in that Place; forasmuch as *ἡ ἀγαθή*, a Virgin, is necessarily suppos'd to be unmarried. So that the best Reading, is thus, *And the unmarried Woman, and the Virgin, careth for the Things of the Lord*; the first of which, as join'd with, and distinguish'd from, the *Virgin*, must needs be the *Widow*; which, in this Verse, is call'd *ἀγαπᾷ*; which Word, when spoken of a Man, may likewise denote a *Widower*, such as St. *Paul* is suppos'd to be when he wrote this Chapter. However, that he formerly had been, or was then a marry'd Man, there's no reasonable Doubt to be made. And what has been observ'd, would make a Man admire that any learned Person should contend that this Apostle liv'd always unmarried.



must needs convince us of the Dignity of the marry'd State, and make us cheerfully subscribe to the Apostle's Doctrine, that *Marriage is honourable in all.*

Truly our Lord himself did not, neither could he, marry; that being unsuitable with the Dignity of his Divine Nature, and the End of his coming into the World. But it is remarkable he did not disdain to be born of a marry'd Woman, and gave the first Manifestation of his Glory at a *Nuptial Feast*. This, I should think, he would never have done, had Marriage been either an unlawful or an inconsiderable Thing. Neither can it be suppos'd he would have countenanc'd a *Bridal Solemnity* with his holy Presence, had there been any Thing evil, or otherwise than honourable in it.

Seeing then the Son of God was pleas'd to afford his Divine Company at a *Wedding Feast*; seeing he was pleas'd to stay 'till the Wine was out, and was likewise pleas'd to make Choice of that Opportunity to give the earliest Demonstration of his Divine Power, by doing his first Miracle, and supplying the Bridegroom with a fresh Recruit of Wine, after the Stock he had laid in was exhausted; I say, seeing a  
Mar-

Marriage was thus worthy of the Presence, the Approbation, and Favour of the blessed *Jesus*, it is sufficient Evidence, (without farther Proof) that Marriage is an honourable State; and that those splendid Entertainments that usually attend the Nuptials, may be allow'd greater Degrees of Mirth and Plenty; and that the Guests may innocently indulge a freer Use (than ordinary) of the good Creatures of God, provided only they keep themselves clean from all unseemly Riots and Debaucheries, which have been known to have sometimes defil'd the Nuptial Solemnity.

And as our Blessed Lord had a good Opinion of Marriage, so had all the holy and worthy Men of old. And therefore it is no Wonder, when *Jephthah's* Daughter was preparing for Death, her Friends mourn'd that she should die a (c) Maid.

[ There needs no farther Proof, that Marriage in ancient Times was always had in high Esteem, and never run down and condemn'd, but by a Parcel

cel of lying and seducing Hereticks; whose Notions in this (as in other Cases) contradicted the sacred Laws of God, and encourag'd the most abominable Leudness and Carnality. You have seen how the Matrimonial State, has been all along, in the purest Ages of the Church, countenanc'd and embrac'd by the wisest and most religious Persons in the World. And such as are absolute Enemies to it, I may presume to affirm, apostatize from the Faith, and are Promoters of the Kingdom of Satan. And that I am not mistaken herein, or too severe in my Reflection, we have the infallible Authority of † St. Paul, who in Effect pronounces such People Apostates, Lyars, infamous Villains, stigmatiz'd Rakes, and Men of a prostituted Conscience; and peremptorily declares, that the *forbidding to marry* is one of the *Doctrines of Devils*.

As to what may be objected from the seventh Chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, it must be consider'd, that whatever the Apostle says of Marriage in that Chapter, that fa-

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† 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2, 3. See Dr. Hammond's Annotations upon the Texts.



mous pretended Chapter for Celibacy, relates not to the *real Dignity* or Lawfulness of the nuptial State, but only to the *accidental Inexpediency* of it at that Time, it being a Time of Distress and Persecution. And what he says, he delivers as his own private Opinion; *I speak*, (says he) *and not the Lord*; and resolves the Questions put to him, by the Rules of human Prudence, with Respect to the Temper and Condition of the Party, and to the Difficulties and Troubles of the Times. And with Regard to the Times, he advises a *single Life*, as being (not more honourable in it self, but) most commodious and agreeable to the then afflicted State of the Church; forasmuch as, we all know, it is more easy for a single Man to grapple with Difficulties, and wade thro' Poverty and Want, as having only himself to take Care of; than for marry'd People who have a Family depending upon them, and can't, in trying and persecuting Times, so well provide for them. Thus much St. Paul advises all unmarried People in general.

In the 36, 37, and 38 Verses, the Apostle considers the Case of Virgins in particular, and not of a Man's resolving (as some think) to marry himself,

self, or to live unmarried; yes, of Vir-  
 gins who are not at their own Dispose,  
 but under the Care and Power of Pa-  
 rents or Guardians; and is directing  
 those Parents and Guardians, whether it  
 be best for them to dispose of their Vir-  
 gins in Marriage, or not. In this Case,  
 he tells them, they must have particular  
 Regard to particular Circumstances, both  
 with Respect to the Virgins themselves,  
 and to the Times. If the Virgin be mar-  
 riageable, and desirous to be marry'd, he  
 advises them so to dispose of her, foras-  
 much as it is the Part of a good Parent to  
 marry his Children. Or if (as the A-  
 postle more particularly expresses him-  
 self in the 36th Verse) a Father *thinks*  
~~he becometh himself uncomely~~, (where the  
 present Tense *becometh*, is put for the  
 future Tense *shall behave*, a Thing usual  
 in the *Greek*) that is, if a Father thinks  
 he shall do ill or unseemly towards his  
 Virgin, in Case he should keep her 'till  
 she shall have pass'd the Prime or Flower  
 of her Age, and it be in the mean Time  
 her Desire to marry, *Need requires* she  
 should marry; therefore (says the A-  
 postle) *let them marry*; the original Word  
 is *γαμίζουσιν* in the dual Number, whereas  
 he before spoke in the singular; so that  
 by *let them marry*, we are to understand  
 the

the Virgin her self, and the Person that has a Mind to her.

But if a Father be satisfy'd he does not wrong or oppress his Daughter, in forbearing to marry her, and finds (as we are taught in the 37th Verse) there is *no Necessity*, either in respect of her Desire, or fear of her growing too old for Matrimony, if her Marriage should be deferr'd; or of worse, in Case she has not the Gift of Continence; *if he has full Power over his own Will*, and is not forc'd to marry his Daughter for these or such like necessary Reasons now mention'd, then *he does well to keep his Virgin*, forasmuch as it is tyrannous in a Parent to marry his Daughter against her own Interest and Consent. And in Regard to the present Times, and the distress'd Condition of the Church, he *does better not to marry her*; that is, does better, not *simply and absolutely* speaking, but does that which is *conditionally* better, or more convenient for his Daughter, with Regard to the present Circumstances of her Condition, and the Hardness and Perplexity of the Times. *So then* (says the Apostle in the 38th Verse) *he that giveth her in Marriage, doth well*; that is, if it be her Desire to marry, and Need so require, as



was before observ'd: *But he that giveth her not in Marriage, doth better*; that is, doth better not to force her, in Case she has no Mind to it, or it be against her Interest to marry. And this the Apostle advises most especially in troublesome Times, even tho' the Virgin be indifferent whether to marry or not; nay, tho' she be betroth'd or promis'd at the same Time, it is better, in such unhappy Times, (if she be so willing) to forbear a-while marrying her; forasmuch as a single Life is more easy and supportable under a State of Persecution, with which the Church was then oppress'd, but not simply and absolutely so; for the same Apostle, in other Cases, recommends a marry'd Life before it, and expressly declares, (if he be the Author of that Epistle) that *Marriage is honourable in all.*

I come now to my second Proposition, which is to shew, That a Wife, meaning (as the Author of my Text explains himself in other Places) a virtuous and prudent Wife, is a great Blessing. *Who so findeth a Wife, findeth a good Thing.*

When God had finish'd the Creation, he view'd all his Works, and saw that they

they were good: If all, then Woman, who was included in those Works; and if Woman, then consequently a Wife must be a good Thing, and the rather because she bears the most endearing Relation to us, and was created for that Purpose.

Society is the Delight of Life, and nothing is more agreeable to our Nature, as well as desirable to our Fancies, than a constant, intimate, and familiar Friend. When God therefore had made Man, and look'd upon him, he saw it was not good for him to be alone, and for that Reason he proceeded to make Woman, as a Companion and *Help-meet* for him.

Alas! *Adam* could not live pleasantly and well, even in Paradise, unless he had a Wife; and therefore a Wife was given him, in whose Company he might delight himself, and enjoy a perpetual Familiarity and Friendship. Tho' he was made Lord of the whole World, and had Dominion over all Creatures in it, still (till a Wife was given him) he wanted a Companion, in Mind as well as in Body, in Disposition and Affection answerable to himself. The greatest Affluence of the good Things of this World could not afford him full Satisfaction, if he must have been left without

without such an useful Friend and suitable Companion.

Indeed there may be a very intimate and endearing Friendship between Man and Man, but the Delight and Benefit of a Friendship between two of the same Sex, cannot be always enjoy'd. There are many Accidents and Occasions that often happen to separate them, whereas in Marriage, a Man and Wife are inseparably fasten'd together, and by the very Ties of Duty and Interest, (the strongest Ties that can be) are join'd in the closest Affection, as if they were but one Person, and had but one Soul and Body, and made faithful and inviolable Friends at all Times, and under all Circumstances, *for better for worse.*

*(d) Therefore shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and cleave unto his Wife.*

Besides, it can't be doubted (methinks nor without great Impiety) but when God's infinite Wisdom and almighty Power was set about forming a Creature for the constant Service and Comfort of Man, he rear'd up the marvellous Architecture, every way beautiful and accomplish'd, and endu'd her with

such



such Excellencies and Perfections, as Woman must needs be capable of making Man happy. And therefore there is something (however the best Things corrupted become the worst) in the Nature and Constitution of that Sex so wonderfully inviting and attractive, as shews an evil *Woman* to be a *Monster*. And such peculiar Endowments God has given them, as render their Conversation (as well as their Persons) more engaging and agreeable. It must indeed be allow'd, that a Man's Company may happen, on some Occasions, to be more instructive, and sometimes the best for Counsel and Advice; but a good Woman has undoubtedly the Advantage of superior Charms to ease his Mind, to divert his Fancy, and cheer up and exhilarate his Spirits. There is (as some observe) a certain Roughness which single Persons (especially if they be naturally peevish or melancholy) contract by the Solitariness of a single Life, which is strangely fil'd off and polish'd by the moving Sweetness and Delicacy of a Woman's Temper. What else could the wise *Ben Syrach* mean, when he said, (e) *A Friend and Companion*

(e) *Ecc. 40. 23.*

*Companion never meet amiss; but above both, is a Wife with her Husband? A Man, by the Perplexity of Business, the Hurry of Affairs, and the Impertinencies of Company, is apt to be a little chagrin and surly; but whatever rumples or discomposes him, is charm'd away by the obliging Conversation of an agreeable Spouse; the Excellency, Prettiness, and submissive Sweetness of whose Society, dispels the Fumes of Melancholy, and lays the evil Spirit asleep.*

And as the Woman was made for Society, so was she likewise made for a *Help-meet* for Man. She was never design'd to be a Cross, a Burthen, or Incumbrance to him, but was ordained from the Beginning, to comfort and assist him in all the Necessaries and Uses of Life; and to partake of his Cares and Labours, as well as share in his Delights and Pleasures. The very Reason of her Formation, (next to the Glory of God) was for the Benefit of Man, that she might be helpful and profitable to him, in the keeping of his House, in the Government of his Family, in the Care of his Health, and in the Preservation of his Estate. And he that  
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has a prudent Woman to his Wife, has greatly the Advantage of a single Person; for while he is doing Business without Doors, or taking his innocent Diversions Abroad, she, at the same Time, is at Home, carefully looking to the Affairs of the Family, which the (f) great Apostle makes to be her proper Office, and the (g) wife Solomon takes Notice of in his large Description of a good Wife; and which truly is the better Way of thriving in the World, of promoting the End of Life, and of providing for the Necessaries and Comforts of it.

And tho' some indeed are apt to think all this may be done by Servants, yet a little Reflection, and, I believe, less Experience, will shew it to be a Mistake; for let Servants be never so faithful, they cannot have that immediate Concern for a Family, as a prudent Wife. She considers, that the looking after a Family, is a *personal Duty*, and there-

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(f) Tit. 2. 5.

(g) Prov. 31. 15, 27.



fore will never suffer her Quality or Fortune to exempt her from overlooking the Affairs of the House, from taking Notice of the Negligence and Spoils of Servants, and seeing to the Education and well-ordering of the Children. These Things a prudent Woman looks upon as personal Duties, and therefore will never think them an Employment too mean for her Estate and Birth, and so leave them entirely to one whom great Wages have dignify'd and distinguish'd, by the Name and Title of *my Lady's House-keeper*, and perhaps made Shift to bribe to be easy, faithful, and honest.

And as a good Wife is helpful to a Man in the Management of his Family, so is she likewise in the Care of his Health, whereof Men are too often regardless themselves, being for the most part taken up and hurry'd with the Affairs Abroad. A prudent Wife will therefore be a kind Monitor and Support to her Husband in this Respect, which she never forgets how solemnly she promis'd that sacred Minute she *plighted her Troth*, and pronounc'd  
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in the Prefence of God, that she would *cherish him in Sicknefs and in Health.*

And as he *who findeth a Wife, findeth a good Thing,* in Respect to the Management of his Family, and the Care of his Health; so does he likewise in Respect to the Preservation of his Estate: She will not diminish it extravagantly; no, nor preserve it niggardly. And while she is endeavouring against one Extream of making a Figure beyond her Circumstances, she will be careful to avoid the other of keeping such a sorry pitiful House, and appearing in so fordid, so ungenteel, and pinching a Manner, as is beneath the Credit of the Family, and the Plentiffulness of the Estate.

Thus we see in how many Respects a prudent Wife is a *good Thing.* She is a constant Comfort and Support to her Husband. Her Company gives a Man Refreshment after Labour, and makes him forget Sorrow and Affliction. She is a Pillar of Rest, and the Heart of her Husband depends upon her as the Traveller weary'd with the Heat of the

the Sun, rests himself under the Shadow of the tender Herb. She is not therefore to be accounted (as some phrase it) a *necessary Evil*, or only a Nursery for Posterity. No, she is a Meet-Help, and the Friendship and Affection between her self and her beloved Consort, are cemented by an equal and a common Love. “ *Paulina’s* Good and mine  
 “ (says (b) *Seneca*) were so wrapt  
 “ up together, that in consulting her  
 “ Comfort, I provided for my own: And  
 “ when I could not prevail upon her  
 “ to take less Care for me, she prevailed  
 “ vail’d upon me to take more Care  
 “ for my self.

So then, what has been said, proves a good Wife to be a Blessing. And for the farther Confirmation of this Truth, it may not be amiss to observe to you what the wise Son of *Syrach* says upon this Point. (i) *Blessed is the Man* (says he) *that has a virtuous Wife, for the Number of his Days shall be double. A virtuous Woman rejoyceth her Husband, and he shall fulfil the Years of his Life in Peace.*

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(b) *Seneca’s Morals*, by Sir Roger L’Estrange. Ch. 18. pag. 229. (i) *Ecclus.* 26. 1, 2, 3.



Peace. A good Wife is a good Portion, which shall be given in the Portion of them that fear the Lord. (k) The Grace of a Wife (as he goes on a little farther) delighteth her Husband, and her Discretion will fat his Bones. A silent and loving Woman is a Gift of the Lord, and there is nothing so much worth, as a Mind well instructed. A modest and faithful Woman is a double Grace, and her continent Mind cannot be valu'd. As the Sun when it riseth in the high Heaven, so is the Beauty of a good Wife in the Ordering of her House. Again he says, (l) The Beauty of a Woman cheareth the Countenance, and a Man loveth nothing better. If there be Kindness, Meekness, and Comfort in her Tongue, then is not her Husband like other Men; that is, he is happier than other Men. He that getteth a Wife, (meaning a good Wife, such as is describ'd in the foregoing Verses) beginneth a Possession, a Help like unto himself, and a Pillar of Rest; that is, beginneth to thrive and rejoyce; but where no Hedge is, there (says he) the Possession is spoil'd; and he that hath no Wife, wandereth up and down mourning.

And

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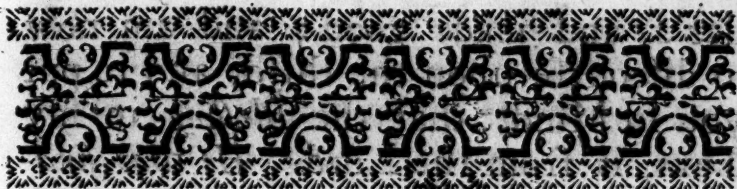
(k) Eccles. 26. 13, 14, 15, 16.

(l) Eccles. 36. 22, 23, 24, 25.

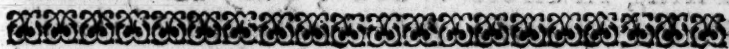
And thus, I do presume, I have undeniably made good my second Proposition, *viz.* That a Wife, a virtuous and prudent Wife, is a great Blessing. *He that findeth a Wife, findeth a GOOD THING.*

I am, in the next Place, to put you in Mind that this Blessing proceeds from the Lord. But this, and some Observations of the *Manner* how this Blessing (when a Man has found and obtain'd it) should be receiv'd and treated; together with some few Directions to those who have never been yet favour'd with this Blessing, in order to their proving happy and successful whenever they come to it, I shall consider and lay before you in my following Discourse.

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## SERMON II.



PROV. xviii. Ver. 22.

*Whofo findeth a Wife, findeth a good  
Thing, and obtaineth Favour of  
the Lord.*



THE Words do offer to us  
these three Propositions;

1<sup>st</sup>, That Marriage is  
an honourable and happy  
State.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That a virtuous and prudent  
Wife, is a great Blessing.

3<sup>dly</sup>, That this Blessing is from the  
Lord.

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The two first I have already consider'd, and made good; and am now to discourse upon the third, and to put you in Mind, that the *Blessing* in my Text, is from the Lord. *He that findeth a Wife, findeth a good Thing, and* (says my Text) *obtaineth Favour of the Lord.* And the same Author, in the very next Chapter, repeats the same Thing in these Words; *(m) Houses and Riches, are the Inheritance of Fathers; and a prudent Wife is from the Lord.*

It is the proper Exercise of Providence, to allot all Men their Fortunes and Conditions in this Life. We could not want to be perswaded of this, if we would consider how punctual and particular God's Providence is, even over the smallest and most trifling Occurrences in the World. Our Saviour has taken Care to shew us, that it extends even to the Life of a *(n)* Sparrow, a Creature of the meanest Value, two of which being worth but the tenth Part of a *Roman Penny*; and yet one of them falls

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*(m)* Prov. 19. 4.

*(n)* Matt. 10. 29.

not to the Ground, without the particular Notice and Providence of God. And even the (o) Hairs of our Head are all number'd; so that not one of them falls off, without the Knowledge of our Heavenly Father. All which is to teach us, that God's Providence is over the meanest, the most inconsiderable, and even contemptible, Occurrences in the World. And if it reaches to these minute Things, which are but (as it were) the Circumstances of Nature; certainly Man, who is the Head and Lord of all, and for whose Sake and Service every Thing else was form'd, may be well assur'd, that God exercises an especial Providence over him and all his Affairs; and if over all, undoubtedly much more over the finding and obtaining that *good Thing* mention'd in my Text, as being an Affair of the greatest Weight and Concern.

It is amazing to see upon what little unexpected Things the Fortunes of Men turn! What a strange accidental Concurrence of different Causes frequently happens, which produces

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unexpected and undesign'd Effects ! This is Reason enough to believe that God governs, what we commonly call, Chance and Fortune ; and that the most unexpected Events, how casual soever they appear to us, are foreseen and order'd by him.

Nothing is more casual than a *Lot*, (and I think *Matrimony* has been often liken'd to a *Lottery*) yet even *that* (as (p) *Soloman* observes) is manag'd and dispos'd of by the Lord. When the *Lot* is drawing, a Man has no Reason to presume he shall draw a *Prize*, rather than a *Blank* : It is all purely accidental ; it is out of Man's Knowledge, and therefore not in his Power. But the Knowledge of God, is a Light shining in every dark Corner, and grasps the most slippery Uncertainties ; and be they never so accidental in their Production, they are all naked and present to his all-seeing Eye. He knows which Way the *Lot* shall fall, as perfectly as if it was already cast. So that nothing is casual or accidental with Respect to God, who foresees and appoints all the Turns  
and



and Vicissitudes of Things, and overrules and directs the odd and unaccountable Surprizes of human Accidents.

Some are rais'd from Nothing, and come to make a splendid and magnificent Figure in the World. Others from small Beginnings, have been advanc'd to the highest Dignity, and seated in Places of the first and second Magnitude: Who, looking upon a Person who perhaps is scarcely arriv'd to the Title of a Gentleman, would imagine that such an one should ever advance to the Grandeur of a Peer? Or that a Woman of the meanest Extract, and but indifferent Merits, should come to be a Dame of Honour? And yet such Things have been, and more strange and unlikely Turns in the Fortunes and Conditions of Mankind.

Who could have thought, (as (q) one, upon another Occasion, has observ'd before me) who could have thought, when *Agathocles* was handling the Clay, and making Pots under his Father, he should ever have come to be King of *Sicily*? And even in our

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(q) Dr. South.

own Age and Country, we have had an Instance (often spoken of) of a (r) broken rascally Fellow, who, from a Thread-bare Cloak, and a greasy Hat, has come to be invested with the Royal Robes; and, in Effect, to wear a Crown (which in Reality I think was never plac'd) upon his Head. Indeed we have had a great many Instances in the World of Mens Fortunes being rais'd, as likewise of their Lives being preserv'd, no Body knows how, nor by what unusual, unobserv'd, and unthought of Instruments and Means.

And in the same surprizing Manner has the Ruin and Downfal of others been brought to pass: Of which the World has not been without awakening Instances; Instances of those who, from the Pinnacle of Honour and Statefulness, have been (when they little expected a Fall) tipt down into the Vale of Misery and Shame.

Alas! one Misfortune, one false Step, a single unexpected Loss, has reduc'd many a Man from Plenty, to a Morsel of Bread. A Bullet, a Tile or a Stone from a House, has prov'd, by  
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mere Accident, the fatal Extinguisher of Life. A Man shall fetch a Stroke with his Ax, to hew down the Tree, and the Head shall slip off from the Helve, and light upon his Neighbour, and kill him. An (s) unlucky Woman shall throw a Stone from the Wall, and it shall please God to direct it to the Head of *Abimelech*, and the King shall be destroy'd.

And thus it happens in the Case of Friendship and Acquaintance, which a Man contracts in the World, and which often terminates into Matrimony ; and that by such unlikely Occurrences, as that *Chance* shall seem to have the ruling Stroke. A long, and sometimes an incoherent, as well as surprizing Series of Accidents, concurs to the producing of it ; which is enough to persuade us, that it is manag'd and brought about by the invisible Hand of Providence. A Man, by mere Accident, lights into Company, possibly being driven into a House by bad Weather, and there begins an Acquaintance with a Person, whom perhaps otherwise he should never have known : This Acquaintance



quaintance continues, and rises to such Endearments, as at last commences into the nearest Relation, and proves the Support of his Mind, and the Comfort of his Life, to his dying Day. Another, as he walks the Streets, by a sudden Glance of the Eye, shall look himself into Admiration, and fall a Victim to her Charms. A third, (with as little Design) by the secret unknown Progressions of the Passions, as he sits at Table, shall gaze away his Heart, be smitten with Flames and Raptures, and lie at the Mercy of the innocent Invader.

Thus we see *Chance* (which Almighty God always governs and directs) has the casting Voice in the Disposal of all Things; Things both of the greatest, and of the least Concern. And I believe there are not many Instances among those who are marry'd, (if they would but sit down, and look back upon that amazing Train of Occurrences that first brought on the Acquaintance, and influenc'd the Passions) but would shew, that *Chance* in no Affair is more ruling, and the Hand of God more visible, than in the Case of Matrimony. In this Sense, I take it, the *finding a Wife* may be liken'd to a Lottery, and  
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the old Saying verify'd, that *Matches are made in Heaven.*

Not that we need suppose, that ever any two Persons are so irrevocably decreed for each other, as they cannot refuse; and (whether they will or no) must come together, in Spight of all Opposition. Why should we think so? That would be an Invasion upon *Free-Will*. But it is the Providence of God, (that great Over-ruler of Time and Chance) which first brings about the Acquaintance from whence proceed those tempting Impressions, so pleasing to our Fancies; which (tho' they do not irresistibly force our Wills) yet do very powerfully charm and invite our Resolutions. So that what is really the Effect of divine Providence, is at the same Time a voluntary and free Act in our selves; and yet *Chance* shall seem to have the ruling Power in the whole.

Men may think what they please of *Policy*, it signifies but little in this, and other like Matters; and *Theophrastus* has been so bold to say, *Vitam regit Fortuna, non Sapientia*; Our Life is govern'd by *Chance*, and not by *Wisdom*. For when we have done all we can, and beat our Brains never so much,  
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the Result of all our Thoughts, Projects, and Devices, are at the Mercy of a single Accident; and therefore, as to the Things of this Life, I conceive it was well said, That one Grain of Fortune, is worth a Pound of Wisdom. The Words of the Tragick Poet upon this Subject, are pretty notable.

*Non sollicitæ possunt curæ  
Mutare rati stamina fusi.  
Quicquid patimur, mortale genus,  
Quicquid facimus, venit ex alto;  
Servatq; sua decreta colus  
Lachesis: durâ revoluta manu,  
Omnia certo tramite vadunt;  
Primusq; dies dedit extremum.*  
Seneca, OEdip. Ver. 981.

Again,

*Regitur fatis mortale genus,  
Nec sibi quispiam spondere potest  
Firmum & stabile: Perque casus  
Volvitur varios, semper nobis  
Metuenda, dies.*

Id. Octav. Ver. 913.

The Poet very elegantly (but a little too much of the Stoick) observes, that nothing is able to prevail over the



the inexorable *Lachesis*, and make her unwind her Spindle; that all that we Mortals do or suffer, comes from above; that all Things proceed in a settled and appointed Course; and that each Day presses on the former. That Mankind is govern'd by *Chance*; that he can promise himself nothing sure and stedfast; that we are all subject to various Accidents; and have Need to be in continual Fear of the evil Day, and always uncertain what will be: Which seems to be confirm'd by the wise Preacher, when he tells us, that Time and Chance happeneth unto all. (t) *I return'd, (says he) and saw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong; neither yet Bread to the Wise, nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and CHANCE happeneth to them all.* Some favourable critical Junctures and unseen Accidents are more powerful than all human Strength, Wisdom, and Policy; or than any the most natural and likely Means of Success.

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(t) *Eccles. 9. 11.*

As to what I have attributed to Chance, if it be consider'd, that I make God the Governor and Director of it, and mean no more by it, than an Instrument of divine Providence, and which can never do any Thing without God's Commission, it is plain I throw aside all absolute Necessity and Fate; and do not contend for any such Thing as mere Chance and Fortune. So far indeed we may admit of *Fate*, as to mean by it the Decree (whether *absolute* or *conditional*) of the divine Will, without which nothing is done; and of *Fortune*, as to mean by that the Concourse or the Event; which, tho' it be not foreseen of Men, hath been foreseen of God, and plac'd among the Series of Causes. All which terminates at last into God's infinite Fore-knowledge and over-ruling Providence.

I doubt not but by this Time you will easily apply what has been said, to the Subject before us; and as little question, but you are perfectly perswaded, that the *good Thing* mention'd in the Text, is a Blessing from the Lord. For who but God (whose over-ruling Providence presides over all Contingencies) brings to pass  
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the first Meeting, and strikes the early Impression? Who but he (who governs even the Hearts of Kings and Princes) works up the Inclinations of the two Parties, and sometimes, contrary to all Likelihood and Appearance, disposes their Hearts and Affections to each other? So certain is it, that *Whoso findeth a Wife, obtaineth Favour of the Lord.*

Thus I have made good the three Propositions offer'd in my Text. However, I must not dismiss this Subject without observing in what manner this Blessing, this *good Thing*, should be receiv'd and treated.

A virtuous and prudent Wife is a Treasure worth seeking in the remotest Parts of the Earth. Her Price is above Rubies; she is like the (u) Merchant's Ship, full fraught and laden with such Comforts and Provisions as will do a Man good all the Days of his Life. She must therefore be receiv'd (with Joy and Thanksgiving) as a *Present* from the Hand of the Lord; and be treated (with all Tenderness and Respect) as a *Help-meet* for Man. She must be look'd

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(u) Prov. 31. 14.



upon as a Partner, a Yoke-fellow, and Companion; and therefore whatever Authority the Husband is allow'd, it must not be (w) arbitrary and outrageous; it must be exempt from Force and Violence, and evermore attended with Moderation, Meekness, and Kindness.

This is but what the Nature of the Marriage-Union requires, which restores to the Man the Rib that was lost, and so makes of Two, One Person: And therefore the Apostle exhorts every Man (x) *to love his Wife as himself*. And to set forth more particularly the Measure of this his Conjugal Love, the same Apostle instances in the greatest Degree of Love that was ever express'd or conceiv'd, and that is, the Love of Christ to his Church, (y) *Husbands, (says he) love your Wives, even as Christ also lov'd the Church, and gave himself for it.*

Now be pleas'd to consider how Christ lov'd the Church, and yet how the Church behav'd herself to Christ. The Church was disobedient, and had many

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(w) Colos. 3. 19.

(xy) Ephef. 5. 33.

(y) Ephef. 5. 25.

many Failings and Imperfections, you know it; notwithstanding which, Christ lov'd her so as to leave all that was near and dear to him, for her Sake, so as to come down from, and relinquish his Father's Embraces, to help, cherish, oblige, and comfort her. And rather than any Mischief or Misfortune should fall upon his belov'd Spouse, he interpos'd between that and her, and took the fatal Blow upon himself: *So ought Men to love their Wives, even as Christ also lov'd the Church.*

And as Christ stript himself of all his Glory, and humbly condescended to a mean Condition of Life, for the Church's Sake; so should, and so will, every good Man, upon Occasion, abridge himself of his former Freedom, Plenty, and Pleasure, which he us'd to enjoy in a single Life, for the Sake and Benefit of his endear'd Partner; and not (as some have done) upbraid and reproach her, as being the Cause of all those unexpected Necessities, Troubles, or Incumbrances he finds in a marry'd State; and of which the poor, innocent, unhappy Woman, 'tis probable, has the greatest Share.

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And there is one Thing which, if it was but duly consider'd, methinks, would soften a Man of the most rigid Temper; I mean the Disadvantages a Wife more especially lies under: The Difficulties and Confinements she is ty'd to, and the unavoidable Pain and Sufferings to which she is subject; and that not only in the breeding and bringing forth her Children, but also in the nursing and bringing them up: I say, if these Things be consider'd, besides many more Disadvantages, and Uneasinesses, and Dangers a Woman is peculiarly expos'd to, Pity and Compassion (where Reason and Religion fail'd) would move a Man (tho' not of the best Temper) to deal tenderly with a Wife, and help to make her Burden as easy and comfortable as may be

Alas! these, and some other Considerations as obvious, will make a Man labour to gain the Love of his Spouse by all the Expressions of Affection and Respect, that she may easily see her own Happiness, and be perswaded she could never have match'd herself to a better Husband, and a more suitable Companion. And all  
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this courtly and obliging Way may (and ought to) be manag'd with so much Moderation and Discretion, that no Encouragement or Occasion shall be given her (even tho' she be an indiscreet and high-spirited Woman) to wax insolent, and forget the Respect she owes to her Husband. For tho' there is an Equality between Man and Wife, there are, however, a great many Things in which the Husband ought to have the Preheminence. And if in such Cases he should yield to the Ambition of a stately domineering Woman, (and which no modest prudent one would expect) he would in all Likelihood too soon find himself under an uneasy Yoke; and, with the Loss of his Authority, lose his Peace and Quiet.

Once more, before I part with my Subject, I must observe, that the *good Thing* in my Text, must be treated as one that has a joint Title to her Husband's Goods and Possessions. It can't be suppos'd, that Persons so united, as to be accounted but *one Flesh*, should have divided Interests, and separate Purfes. A Wife is the nearest Relation which the World affords;  
so

so near, that our Parents, from whom we derive our Being, and whose Flesh and Blood we are, must give Place to this closer Unity; and *a Man must leave his Father and Mother, and cleave unto his Wife*: And that Union which is between them, must be a Union of Goods and Properties, as well as of Heart and Life. We need not go to the *Word of God* for this, for it is agreeable to the common Reason of Mankind; and therefore the *Roman Law* declar'd Marriage to imply *a perpetual Consortship of Life, with a Communication of all divine and human Rights*. A Communication of Rights and Interests, is, by all Nations, esteem'd so natural and necessary, that a Wife (whether she brought any Dowry or no) has a Right (though there preceded no Deed of Settlement) to a Maintenance suitable to herself, out of the Husband's Estate, as well as that the Husband (by Marriage) becomes Proprietor of all that Fortune which (before) she could properly call her own.

Hence it is, that at the publick Solemnization of Matrimony, the Man is directed to address his Bride in these Words;

Words, *With all my Worldly Goods I thee endow* : Which Words were anciently, and are sometimes still attended with (by no Means an insignificant) Ceremony of presenting the Woman with a *Purse*. But whether this *endowing* Ceremony be observ'd or no, by the very pronouncing of the Words, he gives her *Livery* and *Seism* of his Estate ; which, though she must not alienate without his Consent, yet she may (and ought to) have the Use of it for her Occasions. No Man therefore can be just to his Marriage-Contract, who denies his Wife the Use of his Money, and whatever else belongs to him, so far as is necessary to the Support of her Ease and Family, so far as is agreeable to his Ability and Circumstances, suitable to her own Quality and Fortune, and he sees she is not foolishly profuse and extravagant. And he is unworthy of a good and prudent Woman, who (having such an one to his Wife, that merits the entire Possession of his Heart and Soul) shall offer to debar her the Use of his Money, when all that is in his Power to give her, is less than she deserves.



I think I need say no more as to the handsome and obliging manner wherein the *good Thing* in my Text should be treated and receiv'd, as it is a *Blessing* from the Lord.

Now I beg Leave to conclude with an Application (by way of Direction and Advice) to such as never yet have been favour'd, never have been honour'd with the *Blessing* in my Text. And while I am directing in this Matter, I can't be just without observing, that my very Advice is a Commendation of a fresh Instance now before us, whose prudent Example and Conduct in this Case, is a better Sermon than I can preach.

However, let the Consideration of what has been said upon this engaging Theme, (a Theme fit for the Tongue and Rhetorick of an Angel!) teach you, who are not advanc'd to the Marriage-State, (being one of the most important Actions of your Lives, and likely to contribute most to your present Happiness or Misery) to proceed therein with the utmost Seriousness and Concern. There are (it must be acknowledg'd) too many unhappy

happy Matches in the World; but it is (it must be said) for the most part, People's own Faults, that so many are render'd unhappy by coming into this State.

It is pretty odd that (notwithstanding there is no Concern of human Life of so great Weight and Consequence, as that of Marriage) yet no Concern is undertaken with so much Precipitancy and Lightness, and with so little Advisedness and Circumspection. No one Affair that I know of, wherein Men and Women are guilty of greater Folly, and commit worse Blunders, than in the Election of a Spouse. And the Reason, I am confident, why they so frequently miscarry in this Point, is, because, in making their Choice, they have not Regard to those Things which do really (and should chiefly) recommend the Person, and do contribute to the Reputation and Happiness of the State. They neglect the *fundamental Rule* of all, which is never from any Inducement or Consideration whatsoever, to take one whom at the same Time they feel the least Aversion to, and whose Per-

son they think they can never be perswaded to fancy and delight in. Either they marry to satisfy their Lusts, or to fulfil their Avarice. And when Money or Beauty are the only inviting Motives, 'tis then Odds but the indiscreet unthinking Party is quickly deceiv'd, and finds the marry'd Life a State of Sorrow, too like a smoaky House, and, perhaps, the very Picture of Hell.

Therefore, to ensure the Happiness, and experience the Endearments of a marry'd Life, you should be careful to fix your Choice where you have at least a *Liking* to the Person. And this Observation I cannot better urge, and impress upon your Minds, with greater Advantage, than in the Words of an excellent Writer, who in a pretty and ingenious Treatise expresses himself thus, (z) " To love  
 " even with some Passionateness the  
 " Person you would marry, is not  
 " only allowable, but expedient, be-  
 " ing almost necessary to the Duty  
 " of affixing your Affection where  
 " you

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(z) See Boyl's *Seraph. Love*, pag. 6.



“ you have once engag’d your Faith ;  
 “ for it has been observ’d, that Love  
 “ doth seldom suffer it self to be con-  
 “ fin’d by other Matches, than those of  
 “ its own making ; and few (but they  
 “ that are so wise, as they see Cause  
 “ to be almost in Love before-hand  
 “ with those they marry) prove so  
 “ honest, as afterwards to be in Love  
 “ with none else. Since, therefore, the  
 “ Marriage of a wise Man supposes  
 “ at least as high a Degree of Love  
 “ as he is capable to cherish, without  
 “ forfeiting that Title, I can scarce  
 “ disallow the being moderately in  
 “ Love, without being injurious to  
 “ Marriage.

Here we see a great and learned  
 Man no indifferent Advocate for Peo-  
 ple’s *loving* (to be sure then at least  
 for their *liking*) the Person, before  
 they presume to marry. There is on-  
 ly one Thing to be carefully observ’d  
 in this Matter, and that is, not to place  
 their Affections but where they see  
 Cause to love. It therefore nearly  
 concerns you, and is your Interest, as  
 well as Credit, to look in the first Place  
 at the Virtues and Qualifications of  
 the Mind, and then have a decent  
 subordinate

subordinate Regard to the exterior Form and Wealth of the Person. Let Prudence, Virtue, and Religion; let Meekness, Patience, and good Nature; and let that which gives a peculiar Lustre to a Woman's Charms, which, like the *flaming Sword*, keeps the Paradise of her Chastity, and is the Seat, the *Throne* of all the Virtues, let *Moderesty*; let these Things endear the Party, and suffer not your selves to sigh for Beauty, or fall in Love with, and grow mad for Honour or Estate. These latter indeed may be Helps, and contribute to the Vigour of your Flames, and to what they call keeping of Love warm; and therefore it would betray a Defect in a Man's Head, to permit his Heart to be storm'd, and surrender his Person without all Discretion, and not give these Things (however transient and fading) some lesser Degrees of Consideration and Esteem. But still the Beauty of the Mind is the most charming Amiability; the Qualities and Endowments of our immortal Part, are the only lasting Foundation of Love, and will be a constant Spring of fresh Affection and Delight. And  
whereas

whereas that Love, that *Epidemical* Love, ( as *Plato* calls it ) that terminates upon a handsome Face, or a glorious Fortune, ( having no solid Foundation than the satisfying a certain Appetite ) too often goes off in a Surfeit, and expires in the Possession of the Object ; the other, which is founded upon the Virtue, Modesty, and good Nature of the Person admir'd, needs no outward Arts or Embellishments to nourish and support it ; like the *Phoenix*, instead of dying and consuming in its Ashes, will rise the more sprightly and vigorous, and renew its Being. The Virtues and Qualities of the Mind, like so many vestal Virgins, will always preserve the Flame of your Affections, and keep them sweetly burning.

By this Time possibly you may fancy your selves sufficiently prepar'd to make a prudent and a good Choice: But I must tell you, there is something yet behind, to which, if you should not have a great Regard, you may ( notwithstanding all that has been said ) be disappointed in your Expectations, and come off with Disgrace.

That



That you may not therefore join an Ox and an Ass together, it very particularly concerns you not to match to a Person of contrary Principles, and a different Religion. It is the original Design of Marriage, that both Parties should be a Help to one another; how then can they answer it to God, the Author and Ordainer of this State, who join themselves to such as, in all Likelihood, will be a Hinderance to them? And what makes it infinitely worse, a Hinderance in the weightiest Matter, a Matter that concerns the Soul. For that Reason, the Apostle exhorts us, *(aa)* *Not to be unequally yok'd with Unbelievers, but to marry only in the Lord.*

Indeed, when People of different Perswasions in Religion, are actually join'd, tho' it be a great Misfortune to the two Parties, and, I doubt, no small Offence to Almighty God, the Marriage is however valid; and upon that Account, the same Apostle says, *(bb)* *The unbelieving Wife*

*is*

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*(aa)* 2 Cor. 6. 14.

*(bb)* 1 Cor. 7. 14.

is sanctifi'd by the believing Husband; and the believing Man may save his Wife; and so may the believing Woman her unbelieving Husband. And therefore, (as he directs) (cc) the believing Husband ought not to put away the unbelieving Wife, nor the believing Wife to leave her unbelieving Husband.

But when People are free, and at Liberty, and have their Choice to make, they should industriously avoid such unequal preposterous Matches, and contract with no Persons, but what are so far (at least) of the same Mind, as to communicate together in publick, as well as private Devotions. The Inconvenience (besides the Folly and Sinfulness) of unequal Matches, in this Respect, indeed is very great, and oftentimes intollerable. I need not mention the perpetual Danger the Orthodox Party is in of being tempted and corrupted by the Heterodox or Schismatical; but I will put you in Mind how little Appearance and Likelihood there is of that entire Friendship and Affection between the marry'd Couple, I which

which is very strictly requir'd in the Marriage-Union. It can be no Paradox to tell you, that there are manifold Occasions for Jealousies and Disputes; and you know no Disputes occasion more unhappy Differences and Discords, than those about Religion.

Where the marry'd Parties are of different Religions, if they will be constant to their several Principles and Ways of Worship, they must, of Necessity, keep different Companies, resort to different Assemblies, and bestow their Charity and Respect upon different Objects. Hence proceed strange Jealousies; and if they do not suspect (as too often it has happen'd) that they are unfaithful to one another's *Beds*, to be sure they are not so well satisfy'd of their Fidelity in Respect to one another's *Goods*. Indeed it is not to be imagin'd (any more than discover'd) how much Money some foolish Women (unknown to their Husbands) have squander'd away among their dissenting Teachers *they heap up to themselves*, and by whom they are inveigled and *led captive*. But be this as it will, there are so many



ny Occasions for Uneasinesses and Disputes between a Man and Wife of different Perswasions, that where two such are match'd together, it is like joining an Ox and an Ass; a House divided against it self, and such wherein there is scarce a Possibility of discharging the Duties of the conjugal State.

And there is one peculiar Duty, (and a very great one too) I mean the Education of Children; the Guilt of neglecting which, one of the Parties, methinks, must of Necessity incur. It is suppos'd the Father (being the Superior) will expect the Preheminence, and see that the Children be brought up his *Way*. Now, if his should happen to be the *mistaken* Way, what a miserable Thing must it be to the poor Children! and what a Grief and Disappointment to the good Mother! But if the Father should chance to be of the right Profession, and the Mother in the wrong, and he should be so indiscreet as (under a Pretence of Peace and Quietness) to yield up the Education of the Children to his Wife, the Disadvantage will be the same to the Children, and a horrid Guilt stick upon

I 2

both

both the Parents; upon the Father, for his Neglect to his Children; and upon the Mother, for her Disobedience to her Husband. And what if the mistaken Wife should quietly submit her Children to her Husband's Care? If she be a sober and religious Woman in her Way, it will exceedingly trouble her, that she must have no Hand in the Education of her dear Children; which is a Duty she knows every good Mother is concern'd in, and of which some have had so high a Notion, as to think (†) St. Paul so fixes in general the Salvation of Women to the Education of their Children, as to assure them it is by *that* they shall be sav'd.

As to that monstrous Practice of splitting the Difference, and the Father's taking the Sons to his, and the Mother the Daughters to her Care, it argues so mean an Opinion of Religion, and shews so little Regard to the Children's Salvation, as if the Daughters had not Souls as precious and immortal as the Sons, that

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(†) 1 Tim. 2. 15. I don't contend for this Interpretation of this Place of Scripture. See Beza, Grotius, and Dr. Hammond's Annotations upon the Text.

that I am surpriz'd to think any Person should be guilty of such Folly, except an Atheist, and such Infidels as believe there is no After-State for Mankind, or that Women have no Souls. But what am I doing! alas, this is a Practice all over so senseless and unchristian, that it does not deserve a serious Confutation.

So that take it which Way you will, this very Consideration of the insuperable Difficulties and Inconveniences that attend the Education of the Children in such unequal Matches, is enough o'Conscience (without any other) to expose the Iniquity of them, and make every Man and Woman tremble at the Thoughts of contracting with Persons of different Principles and Religion from themselves.

And now, I presume, you need no farther Instructions how to proceed in the enterprizing the Marriage-State. You are sensible it concerns you to set your Fancy upon no Person, but of your own Religion. You know you are to make no Pretensions, but where you are perswaded you shall love. And that your conjugal Endearments may not waste with the Object, you are to crown all with a  
 Regard



Regard to the never-fading Beauties and Ornaments of the Mind. These are those bright Constellations that will always afford Light and Comfort; they are beyond the most illustrious celebrated Charms; they outshine the most splendid nuptial Attire; they are better than Houses and Possessions, and are to be preferr'd before Gold and Silver. A Bride is in her highest Lustre, when her Wedding Garments and external Embroidery are so many Emblems of her inward Beauty, and the more excellent Ornaments of her Soul. Her Glory is in its Meridian, when she appears cloath'd in the Garments of Salvation, adorn'd with the Robes of Righteousness, and set off with the Jewels of Piety. *Favour* (says Solomon) is deceitful, and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Many Daughters have done virtuously, but THOU excellest them all.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 8. line 7. in the Note, for *αὐδῶ*, read *αὐδῶ*. p. 30. in the Note, f. Prov. 19. 4. 1. Prov. 19. 14.

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